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ABSTRACT

This selected bibliography is designed and annotated for those persons interested in building a library of basic books in the designing and construction of theatrical costumes. It is intended for use in secondary schools, colleges and universities, and repertory and professional costume shops. Most of the books cited are in print and are easily obtainable. (RB)

SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON
COSTUME DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

PREPARED FOR THE SPEECH COMMUNICATION MODULE
ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON READING AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

by

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This bibliography is designed for those wishing to build a library of basic books necessary and useful in the designing and construction of theatrical costumes. It is intended for secondary schools, colleges and universities and repertory and professional costume shops. Included are books in print and easily obtainable; excluded are books with limited reference to pattern, and some works aimed toward the lowest amateur level. Because so much excellent work on period pattern has been done in the past 15 years, many of the references cited in this bibliography deal significantly with pattern, some exclusively with pattern, drafting and cuttings. There are many older works which are excellent, and essential to a good costume design and construction library, but they are difficult or impossible to come by. Among these, for example, are the five volumes by Herbert Norris with many diagrammatic drawings, and those by Adrien Harmand, Maurice Leioir, Lillian May Wilson and Juan de Alcaga.

Once these principles are mastered, it becomes unnecessary to rely on printed period patterns except for line, shape and detail. Most patterns can be readily enlarged by one of several methods: by "scaling" or enlarging by graph, by extending the lines to size from a common point, and by means of an opaque projector. The best patterns are from sources and garments contemporary to a specific period, but sometimes the convenience of fit can outweigh the desire for accuracy of period, since period patterns often do not fit the modern body.

Additional information about the approach to costume design and the process of costume construction may be found in some of the standard production texts such as Heffner, Selden and Sellman's Modern Theatre Practices and Principles of Theatre Art by Albright, Halstead and Mitchell.

Arnold, Janet. Patterns of Fashion: Englishwomen's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1660-1860. London: Wace & Co., 1964.

An outstanding set of 30 drawings and patterns from museum dresses, done in 1/8" scale on graph paper for easy enlargement. There are instructions and partial information for construction, but a good knowledge of dressmaking is assumed. These practical patterns are excellent in line and detail, but since they are not rescaled for the modern figure, some adjustment is often needed. There are also 19 patterns from contemporary sources of the same period.

. Patterns of Fashion: Englishwomen's Dresses and Their Construction c. 1860-1940. London: Wace & Co., 1966.

A continuation of the above work in the same format and of equal excellence. The 40 drawings and patterns are taken from original specimens, the sources for which are given. In addition to the 1/8" scale patterns, there are period dressmaker patterns and instructions.

Barton, Lucy. Appreciating Costume. Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1959.

This slim volume is full of theory and information not available elsewhere. Most of it is gleaned from Ms. Barton's long experience. She covers the actor in his costume, the relationship of costume to the rest of production, design, underpinnings, and a whole host of other interesting and informative facts and theories.

Bradfield, Nancy. Costume in Detail, 1730-1930. London: G.G. Harrap, 1968.

This unusual book is composed of 360 detail drawings with measurements of female costume, mostly from the Snowhill Manor collection in England. While not a pattern book, and not for the beginner, the enlarged details and measurements can be of immeasurable value to the more professional designer and costumer.

Bray, Natalie. Dress Pattern Designing: The Basic Principles of Cut and Fit. London: Lockwood, 1964.

This easily followed work covers the entire spectrum of the basics of pattern designing and cutting. The large illustrations and accompanying instructions are clear and excellent, and the principles are easily transferable to period costume. There are more than 100 basic diagrams and nearly 100 sketches of garment styles.

. More Dress Pattern Designing. London: Lockwood, 1964.

This work deals with advanced cutting, lingerie, tailoring and children's patterns. Extremes of the slash-and-expand method of variation are taught, and there are excellent patterns for adaptation to period dress. Unfortunately, both volumes deal only with the female dress. There are over 180 diagrams and sketches as well as 40 plates of styles.

Carnahan, Ruby. How to Make Hats. Chicago: Carnahan Assoc., 1952.

This spiral instruction book has over 500 illustrations and 30 patterns that are clear and easily read. Arranged in 28 lessons, it follows the process step by step, starting with necessary materials and equipment. Patterns are classic shapes such as the pill box, Breton sailor, beret, straws, etc. Most materials are dealt with, as are trimmings, veils and accessories.

Corey, Irene. The Mask of Reality: An Approach to Design for Theatre. Kentucky: Anchorage, 1968.

This beautiful and unique book with 79 color illustrations and 115 black-and-white discusses approach to design, common mistakes and problems, and the fusion of costume and makeup. While the emphasis is on makeup and most examples are stylized, the work is imaginative, inspirational and rational. The techniques portrayed are excellent and the result transcends the limited material.

Crider, James R. Costuming with Basics and Separates. New Haven: Whitlock's Inc., 1954.

This pattern book reduces all costume to a generalized female shape, but emphasizes the fitted bodice as of the best fitting for all sizes and shapes of female. The three sizes (10,12,&14) are easy to enlarge and adapt, but square neck is tricky to raise to take a high collar. This spiral book has 8 photographs of finished garments and 29 plates of scaled patterns and illustrations, all for female costume. The full cartridge pleated skirts work, especially for the 17th century, and lack the skimpiness found in many patterns. Instructions are clear and variations of trim and adaptation are given. The sleeve patterns are very useful and can be used with other bodice patterns by those who demand more authenticity of period.

Edson, Doris and Barton, Lucy. Period Patterns. Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1947.

These patterns, which are easily reproduced, are taken from garments in the Metropolitan Museum and from period pattern sources, and are excellent in design and detail, especially for Elizabethan male patterns. The 39 complete costume patterns in 1/8" scale for both male and female, which cover the periods from 1575 to 1911. They give a historical look to theatrical costumes, but are sized for the modern body. One of the first and still most useful works in the field. There are photographs of the garments used and models of some of the finished muslin mock-ups. This is a supplement to Ms. Barton's Historic Costume for the Theatre.

Green, Ruth M. The Wearing of Costume. London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Son, 1966.

Designed primarily for amateur and school groups, this is a valuable book for designers, directors and actors. After a short chapter on basic principles, Ms. Green discusses management of long skirts, cloaks, and period costumes with changes in stance and attitude. Most of the line drawings are done from contemporary sources.

Hill, Margot H. and Bucknell, Peter A. Evolution of Fashion: 1066-1930. New York: Reinhold, 1968.

The 56 pages of drawings of male and female costume by Ms. Hill are accompanied by 112 patterns for these costumes by Mr. Bucknell. The silhouette patterns, in 1/8" and sometimes 1/16" scale, are easy to enlarge and construct and are scaled for the modern body in a medium size. This is a most complete work on the subject and what is lost in period authenticity is compensated for by not having to adjust for the modern figure. Many of the patterns are excellent and produce fine period costumes. But, the choice of silhouette for some periods may not be the ones desired. All in all, this is a very valuable pattern book, and the best of the non-primary source pattern books.

Kelly, F.M. and Mansfield, Alan. Shakespearean Costume. London: A.&C. Black, 1970.

An expanded revision by Alan Mansfield of the 1938 work by Kelly, the illustrations have been increased and improved, with more English sources being used. A history and reference, based on modern research on the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. This scrupulous study gives documented evidence of what was worn at the time of Shakespeare. The sources and research available to Mr. Mansfield which were not available 30 years ago, have enabled him to make this valuable work more valuable and more relevant to the director and designer.

Kelly, F.M. and Schwabe, Rudolph. Historic Costume: A Chronicle of Fashion in Western Europe. New York: Scribners, 1929. (Blom, 1968).

Illustrated with contemporary art, this remains a fine, authoritative, interpretive history. The metric patterns are well-scaled and useful for the period 1490-1790. Many are from Leloir's Histoire du Costume.

Köhler, Carl. A History of Costume. Ed. Emma von Sichert. Philadelphia: David McKay, 1928. (Dover, 1963).

This work, covering the history of the development of dress from antiquity until 1870, is based upon scholarly research and examination which produced patterns of extensive range. This technical reference was a first in its day, but the scale patterns with measurements stand up today and are easily enlarged. There are descriptions of some of the photographed garments in the list of illustrations.

Lawson, Joan and Revitt, Peter. Dressing for the Ballet. London: A. & C. Black, 1958.

A useful book for making ballet and dance costumes. The patterns and text are for classic shapes in ballet. There are more than 100 illustrations and patterns, which while rather basic, are well-scaled.

Linthicum, Marie Channing. Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963).

Illustrated with 22 plates of photographs from contemporary garments, and containing useful chapters on color and textiles of the day, this is a useful book for anyone costuming plays of the period. Color symbolism, dyeing and fastenings, and an extensive bibliography are included in this unique work.

Margolis, Adele P. How to Design Your Own Dress Patterns. New York: Hanover House, 1959.

Assuming a basic knowledge of sewing, this excellent work can be of great value to those involved with making period costume; it shows, in clear instruction and illustration, the method of adapting commercial patterns to suit one's personal needs and taste. The slash-and-expand method is a vital tool for creating original designs. Chapters on darts, fit, sleeves, yokes and making basic fitting patterns (and virtually everything else) are included. This is a practical and very well-written book, and a necessary part of any construction library.

Motley. Designing and Making Stage Costumes. New York: Watson-Guptill, 1965.

Motley is the joint pseudonym of Sophie Devine, Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery, distinguished British designers. One of the few books on creating costume, it is designed for student and professional alike, with a step by step approach. The book is written in an interesting manner and the information, based on the long experience of the authors, is invaluable and inspirational. Illustrated with 99 plates of modern theatrical costume designs plus more than 100 sketches of period costume and techniques, it lacks reference in the text to the fine designs.

Payne, Blanche. History of Costume. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

This costume reference with its thirty 1/8" scale authentic period patterns taken from contemporary garments, is the best single volume comprehensive work to date for history and costuming. The choice of patterns is good for both male and female. An excellent text book.

Peters, Joan and Sutcliffe, Anna. Making Costumes for School Plays. London: Batsford, 1970.

Designed to provide the necessary basic information for costuming plays on the school level, this is work that has some unique materials on style, fabric, details, jewelry, leather and armor, etc., and it covers a wide range of information. While some of the pictured results are poor, the described and illustrated techniques are very useful. Of particular worth are the stylized and three-dimensional items, especially jewelry. There is a list of British and USA suppliers.

Prisk, Bernice. Stage Costume Handbook. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

One of the few handbooks designed for the college level, this includes the history of dress as well as chapters on national and traditional costume. Part II includes chapters on the process, workshop, fabrics, patterns, dyeing and painting, masks, armor and special parts of costume. There is a costume crew manual, and appendices on draping and sources for renting and buying. The patterns are simplistic, but often useful, giving a generalized look to historic costume, but the simple patterns of headdresses and accessories are not easily found elsewhere. The 40 plates of costume illustrations are very general, but this is still a useful handbook for schools.

Russell, Douglas A. Stage Costume Design: Theory, Technique, & Style. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

An examination of the process of costuming from script to production, it handles all of the technical aspects as well as paying attention to the historical, practical and aesthetic aspects, including the creation of the design and style in production.

Sheringham, George and Laver, James. Design in the Theatre. London: The Studio, 1927. (Blom, 1971).

This reprint of the 1927 work in a black and white facsimile edition, contains articles by designers such as E. Gordon Craig. The more than 100 illustrations of costume and scenic designs by English and continental designers form the main body of the work.

Smith, C. Ray, ed. The Theatre Crafts Book of Costume. Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale Press, 1973.

Twenty-two articles by dedicated designers in professional and educational theatre that appeared originally in Theatre Crafts cover a variety of areas in design and costume management. Most of the chapters are illustrated with photographs of sketches and productions of the various authors' work. Valuable practical and creative ideas are given on such subjects as plastics, polyurethane, budget, shop management, stylization and regional theatre costuming. The various articles are not interrelated.

Tilke, Max. Costume Patterns and Designs. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957.

A survey of costumes and patterns from every nation and period, concentrating on non-western costume, with excellent diagrammatic drawings of African and Asian garments. There are 128 plates of illustrations and photographs, mostly in color, with nearly 2000 patterns. The patterns are difficult to scale, but give a useful idea of how the garments are made. Much here is not readily available elsewhere.

Waugh, Norah. Corsets and Crinolines. London: Batsford, 1969.

Covering the silhouette of women's dress from 1630-1925, this is still one of the most useful and authoritative works in the field. The large corset patterns are excellent, and while more intricate to enlarge than most, give the best results. The glossary of materials and terms is helpful. (Also available in paperbound).

. The Cut of Men's Clothes: 1600-1900. London: Faber & Faber, 1964.

This excellent, scholarly work uses only contemporary, primary sources for the 42 diagrams of patterns in scale from outstanding examples of garments. There are 29 plates of photographs of garments and contemporary fashion plates, portraits, etc., plus 27 detail drawings and reproductions of tailors' patterns. Included is a supplementary list of artists, engravers, etc. The most authoritative and indispensable reference in the field.

. The Cut of Women's Clothes: 1600-1930. London: Faber & Faber, 1968.

Completed after the death of Ms. Waugh by Margaret Woodward, who did the line diagrams, this is the most comprehensive and excellent work of its kind. With 75 cutting diagrams, 54 tailors' patterns and 71 plates of photographs of art sources and contemporary garments, it is truly an indispensable part of any good costume library. Practical and scholarly with well-chosen examples for the patterns, its only shortcoming is that adjustment for the modern figure is often necessary.